



News from

# Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1406 Longworth House Office Building • Washington, D.C. 20515 • (202) 225-5506

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Contact: Stephanie Lundberg  
Phone: 202-225-5506

## Australia Deal Deserts Dairy

*Kind stands in opposition to United States – Australia trade agreement*

**WASHINGTON, DC** – U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) issued the following statement today on the passage of the United States - Australia Bilateral Trade Agreement (HR 4759):

“Ignoring the strong opposition of our nation’s dairy producers, the Bush administration pushed through a bilateral trade deal with Australia that will hurt Wisconsin’s family farmers. Despite my efforts to fight for dairy, the trade agreement passed in the House of Representatives today and is expected to pass in the Senate in the near future. Unfortunately, due to a death in my family, I was unable to vote against the trade agreement as I had intended, but my opposition to this agreement stands.

“Early on in the negotiations, I saw the potential harm this agreement posed to western Wisconsin’s dairy farmers and repeatedly raised my concerns with negotiators. My efforts, and those of other members of Congress representing rural areas, helped avert a much worse trade agreement for our dairy producers by ensuring tighter controls on imports. Unfortunately, this agreement grants Australian dairy producers an additional 55 million pounds of new tariff-free access. This could cause U.S. dairy farm income to drop by \$237 million in the first year of the agreement alone.

“The Australia trade bill could have been made fairer for our dairy farmers if President Bush would have simply supported bipartisan legislation that I cosponsored to close the trade loopholes that are allowing milk protein concentrate (MPC) and casein to flood into the country. Nothing in this trade agreement limits or safeguards the United States against expanded imports of these products in the future.

“Finally, after many years of struggle, dairy producers are enjoying prices that fairly compensate them for their labor. Now is not the time for our government to make things harder for them. Fair trade agreements can be a good way to help the Wisconsin dairy industry to financially grow and prosper. Opening foreign markets can provide an opportunity to increase international exports while relieving some of the pressure placed upon the market by domestic overproduction. Unfortunately, this administration has not demonstrated that it understands these principals, but has instead consistently bargained away agriculture interests as a way to assist other, more favored sectors of our economy.”